

think that it is reasonable that a department head have some flexibility as to the distribution of increases in salaries. I know no business that operates on a similar basis where uniform increases are given irregardless of the performance of each individual. That kind of practice would be available to state government, it seems to me, would only make common sense. Thank you, Senator Koch.

PRESIDENT: Senator Koch, would you continue with the close?

SENATOR KOCH: Thank you, Mr. President. I am a little surprised at Senator Kelly who has through the six years that I have known him has generally been an individual who had talked to the issue of efficiency in government. To me, this amendment is a step in that direction, and to reaffirm a comment of Senator Warner's, some people are misusing the word "merit". July 1, 1978 any agency head can immediately give to those staff members 6 1/2% increase. With the rapid escalation of cost of living, to me this would be most appropriate. Each day, almost today, you hear the cost of living is ascending and this isn't going to change, particularly, when the impact of the coal strike is fully upon us. I can be assured and would be assured that most agency heads would give to their employees 6 1/2%, would not withhold it until a later date. It appears to me that this would be to the best interest of almost all employees, and to those employees who are marginal, they would get their four percent and that is much better than a dismissal because it would encourage them to upgrade their productivity and their work capacity to the State of Nebraska. So they, too, would then be eligible for the full amount of the money which later on could come to them if that was determined by the agency head. I submit to you this bill, as Senator Kelly alluded to, is not one of nepotism nor not one of patronage. If we have that much nepotism and patronage in state government, then this body should be a little more careful in terms of hiring practices and what departments they are employed in. So I ask you to adopt this amendment. I think it is fair to all employees and I have yet to have no criticism from any employees on this amendment and they know about it. The only individual who has approached me is the person who represents the Nebraska Association of Public Employees. No agency head has contacted me about this would be unworkable. They would not be able to manage it. Therefore, I believe it is a good amendment. I ask for the adoption.

PRESIDENT: The question is the adoption of Senator Koch's amendment. Record your vote. Have you all voted? Record.

SENATOR KOCH: Mr. President.

PRESIDENT: Yes.

SENATOR KOCH: I request a Call of the House.

PRESIDENT: A Call of the House.

SENATOR KOCH: And a roll call vote.

PRESIDENT: And a roll call vote. All right, the question is,